

and he would change them whenever he wished.<sup>1</sup> These answers marked the isolated position which the King and his friends had chosen. Not only would they defy the lords, but they would treat the Commons with contempt. The knights of the shires had only one course open to them. If they were to recover the right of criticising the government, and the share in appointing councils which they had lately enjoyed, they must unite with the nobles to reduce the pretensions of the Crown. This union was maintained until its final triumph over Richard in the last year of the century, when a constitutional government by King, Lords and Commons was established as the basis of the Lancastrian settlement. We have no intention of relating the events of that struggle and of that revolution, for they form a separate chapter of English history, beginning with the revolt of Parliament against Richard in 1386, and ending with his resignation in 1399. We have traced the course of politics from the time of the Good Parliament up to the end of the year 1385. We have cleared the stage and said the prologue for the \* Tragedy of King Richard the Second.'

There is more than one reason "why a break in political history can be made here with advantage. We have traced the career of John of Gaunt practically to its close. In the spring of 1386 he sailed for the Peninsula with an armament great enough to prolong the war there against the King of Castile and his French allies, but quite insufficient to conquer Spain. While he warred beyond the seas, the revolt of the country against Richard began under better auspices than his. The cause was taken up by his brother Buckingham, now made Duke of Gloucester, and his son, Henry Bolingbroke; but he himself, even when he returned to England in 1389, took no contentious part in affairs. It was left to his wiser and more popular son to carry through the ambitious designs which he had formed for the aggrandisement of the House of Lancaster. He must have turned in his grave for joy when Henry was proclaimed King of England in place of Richard the Second, but he himself, in spite of his great power and position, had been uniformly unsuccessful. He had failed in

<sup>1</sup> *RoL'Parl.*, Hi. 204, 213, sees. 32, 38.